

## **CLAIMS:**

1. A method for the analysis of existing organizational conflict handling procedures and recommending new organizational conflict handling procedures for the resolution of conflicts comprising the steps of:
  - a) identifying existing organizational conflict handling procedures:
  - b) applying a predetermined conflict resolution analysis template defining a preferred path for the resolution of conflicts, for identifying indicators of weakness in conflict handling procedures, to said existing organizational conflict handling procedures; and
  - c) creating recommendations for new organizational conflict handling procedures that adhere to the preferred path.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of requiring the new organizational conflict handling procedures to begin with site based resolution options for each new conflict.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of periodically reviewing preselected conflict resolution variables according to the template defining the preferred path and indicating if additional modifications to the new organizational conflict handling procedures are necessary in light of said review of the preselected conflict resolution variables.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of reviewing preselected conflict resolution  
2 variables includes the step of selecting variables from a group including at least:  
3 conflict handling policy, personnel roles and responsibilities for handling conflict,  
4 conflict handling procedures documentation, selection of personnel with conflict  
5 handling skills, personnel education and training for conflict handling, support for  
6 conflict handling initiatives, and evaluation of conflict handling outcomes.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the preferred path further includes the step of  
2 examining internal site-based resolution options between parties in conflict, between  
3 said parties and others by collaboration, and between said parties by referral to internal  
4 higher authority.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of identifying indicators of weakness includes  
2 the step of identifying: poor complaint handling; poor communication skills; poor  
3 negotiation skills; grievance procedures based on higher authority alone; overuse of  
4 litigation; adding ADR to a weak procedure; lack of continuity between conflict  
5 procedures for employees, customers, and business partners; and inadequate prevention  
6 procedures.

1 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of identifying indirect indicators of  
2 weakness in the form of: high litigation expenses; lost/low productivity; bad press;

3 strikes/poor labor relations; lost business; and internal disputes over how or when to  
4 use ADR.

1 8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of requiring each new conflict to  
2 proceed sequentially through the preferred path of four conflict resolution gates  
3 beginning with individual site based initiatives, followed by internally supported  
4 negotiations, followed by external mediation, and lastly by referral to higher authority.

1 9. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of periodically reviewing preselected conflict  
2 resolution variables comprises the step of the evaluation of: expenses involved, the  
3 satisfaction of the parties, the utilization of the new conflict handling procedures, and  
4 the resolution of the new conflict.

1 10. A method for the analysis of existing organizational conflict handling procedures and  
2 recommending new organizational conflict handling procedures for the resolution of  
3 conflicts comprising the steps of:  
4 a) identifying existing organizational conflict handling procedures;  
5 b) applying a predetermined conflict resolution template defining a preferred path  
6 for the resolution of conflicts, for identifying indicators of weakness in conflict  
7 handling procedures, to said existing organizational conflict handling  
8 procedures, wherein the preferred path for conflict resolution includes four  
9 conflict resolution gates beginning with individual site based initiatives,

10 followed by internally supported negotiations, followed by external mediation,  
11 and lastly by referral to higher authority;

12 c) creating recommendations for new organizational conflict handling procedures  
13 that adhere to the preferred path; and

14 d) periodically reviewing preselected conflict resolution variables according to the  
15 template defining the preferred path and indicating if additional modifications to  
16 the new conflict handling procedures are necessary wherein the conflict  
17 resolution variables are selected from a group including at least: conflict  
18 handling policy, personnel roles and responsibilities for handling conflict,  
19 conflict handling procedures documentation, selection of personnel with conflict  
20 handling skills, personnel education and training for conflict handling, support  
21 for conflict handling initiatives, and evaluation of conflict handling outcomes.

- 1 11. In a computer system with a database, computer readable media linked to the database  
2 for providing for the analysis of existing organizational conflict handling procedures  
3 and creating new organizational conflict handling procedures for the resolution of  
4 organizational conflicts, the computer readable media comprising:
- 5 a) instructions for a predetermined conflict resolution template defining a preferred  
6 path for the resolution of conflicts, for identifying indicators of weakness in said  
7 existing organizational conflict handling procedures ;
- 8 b) instructions for examining indicators of weakness in said existing organizational  
9 conflict handling procedures identified by said template; and

c) instructions for modifying identified weaknesses in said existing organizational conflict handling procedures and creating new organizational conflict handling procedures that adhere to the preferred path .

12. The invention of claim 11 further comprising instructions requiring the new organizational conflict handling procedures to begin with site based resolution options for each new conflict.

13. The invention of claim 11 further comprising instructions for periodically reviewing preselected conflict resolution variables according to the template defining the preferred path and indicating if additional modifications to the new organizational conflict handling procedures are necessary.

14. The invention of claim 13 wherein the instructions for periodically reviewing preselected conflict resolution variables further include instructions for selecting conflict resolution variables from a group including at least: conflict handling policy, personnel roles and responsibilities for handling conflict, conflict handling procedures documentation, selection of personnel with conflict handling skills, personnel education and training for conflict handling, support for conflict handling initiatives, and evaluation of conflict handling outcomes.

1 15. The invention of claim 11 wherein the instructions for a preferred path further comprise  
2 instructions for examining internal site-based resolution options between parties in  
3 conflict, between said parties and others by collaboration, and between said parties by  
4 referral to internal higher authority.

1 16. The invention of claim 11 wherein the instructions for identifying indicators of  
2 weakness includes instructions for identifying: poor complaint handling ; poor  
3 communication skills; poor negotiation skills; grievance procedures based on higher  
4 authority alone; overuse of litigation; adding ADR to a weak procedure; lack of  
5 continuity between conflict procedures for employees, customers, and business  
6 partners; and inadequate prevention procedures.

1 17. The invention of claim 16 further comprising instructions for identifying indirect  
2 indicators of weakness in the form of: high litigation expenses; lost/low productivity;  
3 bad press; strikes/poor labor relations; lost business; and internal disputes over how or  
4 when to use ADR.

1 18. The invention of claim 11 further comprising instructions for requiring each new  
2 conflict to proceed sequentially through the preferred path of four conflict resolution  
3 gates beginning with individual site based initiatives; followed by internally supported  
4 negotiations, followed by external mediation, and lastly by referral to higher authority.

1        19.    The invention of claim 13 wherein the instructions for periodically reviewing  
2                preselected conflict resolution variables further comprise instructions for the evaluation  
3                of: expenses involved; the satisfaction of the parties; the utilization of the new conflict  
4                handling procedures; and the resolution of the new conflict.